

**Clark County Comprehensive Plan Update
RESPONSE TO DEIS COMMENTS
Position Statement 1,
ON JOB CREATION**

The focus of Clark County's Economic Development strategy is to grow a high-wage, knowledge-based economy that creates jobs at a rate in excess of population growth. Industry recruitment and other economic development activities will support existing and emerging industry clusters that have a significant knowledge-based component. The clusters targeted to drive the future economy are semiconductor and electronic manufacturing, telecommunications, knowledge-based service industries, life sciences, healthcare, and expansion of locally owned businesses. There will also be emphasis on the retention and expansion of existing businesses as the baseline for additional job creation.

Land for jobs:

According to state law, population totals must fall within a range provided by the Office of Financial Management. However, employment control totals used for the comprehensive plan are a matter of local prerogative. The Board of County Commissioners' direction is to assure sufficient urban land supply is incorporated into the Proposed Comprehensive Plan Map – 2003 to enable creation of 84,300 "covered" jobs over the next 20-years. This is a more aggressive job creation goal than has been the historic experience in Clark County. It is also more aggressive a job creation target than was embodied by any of the original 5 alternatives. This single quantifiable change is indicative of the serious intention of the staff and decision makers to make the economic development strategy a success.

The geographic placement of these new employment centers was influenced by many factors. One issue was that of jurisdictional equity. Many cities wanted new employment lands, yet only a limited amount should be urbanized at any single time. Generally accepted principles of good planning, like that of compact growth, also influenced expansion requests (see the Position Statement on the Discovery Corridor). When designating new land for jobs, staff and decision makers also applied the following guidelines:

1. Utilize urban reserves,
2. Avoid resource lands,
3. Bring large parcels into the UGA,
4. Focus on areas found to be efficient and affordable for the provision of public services,
5. Public input,

Focused Public Investment Planning

In the past Clark County dispersed its capital improvements expenditure throughout the county providing partial solutions to many areas, but not complete solutions to priority areas. Given the limited resources available for infrastructure, the county needed a more strategic approach to investment of public funds. The county can focus capital improvements in some select areas rather than spreading capital improvements throughout the region. A particular geographical area will produce acceptable levels of service for development in that area. Such areas can be said to contain "fully-served" land because all public facilities meet or exceed future development standards. If these areas are planned for employment development, then the County will also be achieving one of its economic development goals.

The Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) has been reorganized as a Focused Public Investment Plan (FPIP), to allow the County to target infrastructure improvements in areas that require the least cost to provide fully served land that is ready for industrial development by businesses providing family wage jobs. The FPIP does not dilute the public investment by spreading it thinly in every part of the County at the same time. The FPIP also avoids public investments in areas that promote undesirable development.

Focused Public Investment Plans are different than traditional capital facilities plans because they (1) use level of services standards as the basis for determining the need for capital facilities, (2) target capital improvement expenditures in Focused Public Investment Areas (FPIAs) to produce “fully-served land” for development, and (3) represent a commitment of resources to fully fund the needed infrastructure in designated areas to support economic development. The FPIP approach concentrates available funds in the most efficient and effective manner to upgrade FPIAs to a “ready-to-develop” status. Experience shows that the market responds well to “shovel ready” sites at which development can begin as soon as plans and approvals are completed.

Other techniques for economic development

The following new goals have been added to The Comprehensive Plan Chapter on Economic Development:

GOAL 7.1: Continue to identify and refine targeted industries to guide public policy, infrastructure development, workforce training, and other economic development initiatives.

GOAL 7.8: Provide incentives for “targeted” industries to guide public policy, infrastructure development, work force training, and other economic development initiatives. Targeted industries should focus on identified clusters for which the region has a strategic advantage and those supported by existing infrastructure and workforce base.

Additionally, the County is developing an Economic Development Strategic Plan. This plan provides a framework for the integration of many new techniques. One such technique is express permitting. Community Development is preparing to launch a streamlined permitting process for projects with significant job creation or capital investment benefits. A similar effort is underway to allow for environmental pre-qualification of sites. These techniques, combined with sub-area planning in focused public investment areas, will provide for a more welcoming environment to new jobs.

The Strategic Plan also calls for the commitment of staff resources to economic development. Currently, there is no specific work group focused on economic development. Numerous programs and projects share the goals of job creation, yet there is an opportunity for greater coordination of these efforts.

Lastly, the new transportation Capital Facilities Plan will be accompanied by the setting of new concurrency levels of service on specific roadways. The new standards will embrace the concept of focused public investments. The concurrency program is also to be modified to allow for reservation or allocation of vehicular trips that serve job sites. This will provide an effective means of saving transportation capacity for projects that provide family-wage jobs, large capital investments and other economic development.